



## The Latin American Photobook

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# The Latin American Photobook

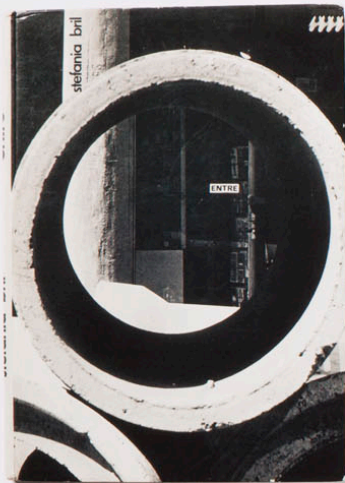
Horacio Fernández

Impresión Editorial del Correo

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Miguel Ángel Corral, Carlos A. Noya, Solís



Stefania Bril *Entre*

Photographs Stefania Bril

Design Stefania Bril, Olney Krüse

Text Olney Krüse, Boris Kossay

São Paulo, Brazil: Stefania Bril, 1974. 11 1/4 x 8 1/2 in. (28.5 x 21.5 cm), 150 pages, 78 b/w photographs, illustrated hardcover, print run of 1,000 numbered copies, 100 of them hors commerce.

1974 | *Entre*

"Eu nada entendi da dura poesia concreta de tuas esquinas" (I understood nothing of the hard concrete poetry of your street corners), sings Caetano Veloso in "Sampa," the song that perhaps best describes the way many Brazilians feel about São Paulo. In the land of samba, the financial and industrial capital of South America has the reputation of being a cold metropolis of cement, work, and money. Nevertheless, the eye of Stefania Bril, a photographer born in Poland who worked as a chemist before dedicating herself full-time to photography, suggests just the contrary: in *Entre* (Enter), São Paulo appears to be a city in which lyricism and friendliness can be found on every street corner. Perhaps the best proof of this is the

image that concludes the book: a smiling Stefania Bril next to a no-less-smiling Olney Krüse, responsible for the successful design of the photobook, at a stand in a street market offering flowers for seven cruzeiros a bouquet.

If anything stands out in the photobook *Entre*, it is the photographer's desire to read the city not only through the images it offers, but also in the words that tattoo it: Bril collects the texts of signs, announcements, and graffiti painted on the fenders of trucks (to which she would dedicate another photobook, *Arte do caminhão* [Art of the Truck] in 1981). These words are usually phrases somewhere between proverbs, old saws, and compliments, and their presence

enriches and humanizes everyday life by adding poetry to it. Thus, every image is transformed into a metaphor. On one page, a drugstore sign next to a broken public telephone seems to comment on the failure of communication that comes of drug abuse. On another, visitors at an exhibition appear behind the works of art, reaching around to feel the breasts and buttocks on the canvases without us seeing their faces. This playful and amiable spirit begins on the magnificent front cover, which shows the round opening of a cement pipe through which the visitor may come into a new world, encouraged by the title itself, that invites us to "Enter."

The book was privately printed in 1974. The

images of traffic, trucks, and crowded streets still preserve the thoughtful honesty of someone who might well meet up with flower vendors on the street. The trucks bear inscriptions like "If loving were a sin I would never be forgiven"; the street contains humorous elements, like the mesh fence on which a sign reading "visits" is posted, with an arrow pointing to the toilet. Nevertheless, these same images may also presage a turn toward the upheavals of coming years, when the traffic and the cement get the upper hand against poetry.





**Eduardo Terrazas, Arnaldo Coen** *Sin saber que existías y sin poderte explicar*

Photographs Eduardo Terrazas

Design Eduardo Terrazas, Arnaldo Coen

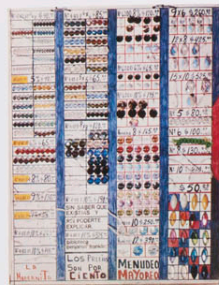
Text Gustavo Sainz  
Mexico City: Biblioteca Benjamin Franklin, 1975. 10 1/4 x 8 1/4 in.  
Q27 x 21 cm. 24 pages, 24 b/w photographs printed in three  
colors, illustrated softcover.

**1975 | Sin saber que existías  
y sin poderte explicar**

In June 1975, Eduardo Terrazas and Arnaldo Coen presented the exhibition *Sin saber que existías y sin poderte explicar* (Without Knowing You Existed and Without Being Able to Explain) at the Benjamin Franklin Library, an annex of the U.S. embassy in Mexico; the embassy's cultural section paid the expenses. Coen was a painter like Terrazas, who was also an architect and graphic designer. The latter had been responsible for the logo of the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City.

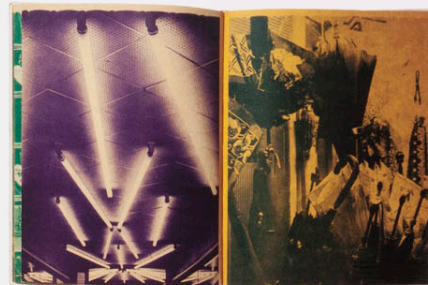
The showing was announced by a multipage poster, apparently composed with the letters the typesetter had nearest to hand at the press where it was printed. "BORED? GETTING MARRIED? DO HAVE YOU PROBLEMS? DO YOU DISLIKE YOUR JOB? UNIQUE!! SENSATIONAL!! Visit the showing WITHOUT KNOWING YOU EXISTED AND WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO EXPLAIN which offers all kinds of objects, including dentures, clothing for boys and girls, umbrellas, jewels, 100% Terlenka sports jackets, crotches, orthopedic apparatuses, sweets and candies, tights in general, everything necessary for sewing, panties and all kinds of underwear, everything for your lighting needs, pastas, wedding gowns and cakes, zippers, everything for your doll, your favorite idols, doll-sized photos, teaspoons, and scissors. . . ."

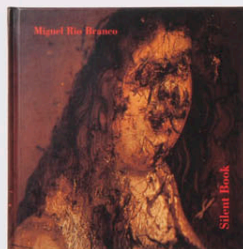
The list enumerates the objects in the exhibition, which also appear in the catalog of the same name, made up of highly contrasted black-and-white full-page



photographs printed in combinations of cyan, magenta, and yellow that change from page to page. The result is a unique and sensational artist's book, at once a catalog of damaged merchandise, a graphic tour-de-force (in the modestly printed category), that tests the limits of ink, and an exemplary photobook in its use of the image. The text is limited to a few notes at the bottom of the page by the writer Gustavo Sainz, phrases halfway between slogans and free verse such as: "image-vending altars," "an invitation to see (recognize with care)," "art is universal and anonymous," "he who sees not is blind," "apart from fashion," "found objects," etc.

As Terrazas recalls, his objective was "to show that the design of the display windows in the historic center of Mexico City is of popular origin and seeks to communicate retailers and consumers through direct and obvious presentations. This method of advertising has a unique aesthetic quality." The exhibition was "an invitation to see, a celebration of the playful and subjugating expression of objects placed on display in store windows. The design and production of the catalog is a homage to these visual strategies of popular culture." As the sociologists of the Frankfurt School argued, "to perceive reality as a reality of objects, and therefore basically of merchandise" is a characteristic of the modern gaze, the gaze of the passerby who constructs fantasies of happiness and equality through the visual consumption of found objects.

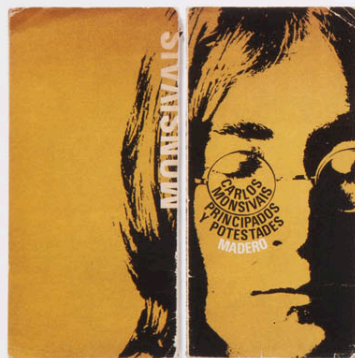




Miguel Rio Branco *Silent Book*  
Photographs Miguel Rio Branco  
Design Jean-Yves Coussieu  
São Paulo, Brazil: Cosac & Naby, 1997. 7 1/2 x 7 1/2 in. (20 x 20 cm). 98 pages, 3 foldouts, 75 color photographs, illustrated hardcover.



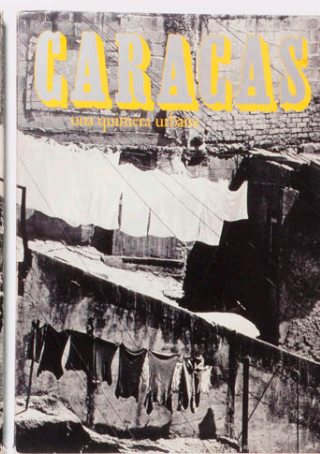




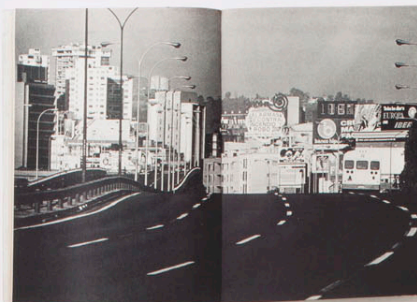
Carlos Monsiváis *Principados y potestades de show y público*  
Photographs Hector Garcia  
Design Vicente Rojo  
Mexico City: Librería Madero, 1969. 101 p. 5 1/2 x 5 1/2 in. (14 x 14 cm), 80 pages, 27 b/w photographs, illustrations, illustrated softcover, hors commerce edition.



Other photobooks designed by Vicente Rojo: *La ciudad de México III* — page 92 | *New Mexican Grandeur* — page 94



Ramón Paolini *Caracas una quimera urbana*  
Photographs Ramon Paolini  
Design John Lange, Pedro Mancilla  
Text Federico Vegas  
Caracas, Venezuela: Editorial Arte, 1985. 111 p. 8 1/2 x 10 1/2 in. (21.5 x 26.5 cm), 106 pages, 66 b/w photographs, softcover with illustrated jacket.



#### John Lange

John Lange is a respected designer of exhibitions, printmaker, set designer, and above all, graphic designer of books, magazines, catalogs, and posters, who has worked in Caracas since the 1960s. Lange's interest in theater and dance is reflected in his first photobook, *Duraciones visuales* (*Visual Durations*, 1963), with photographs by Barbara Brindl, in which he attempted to produce choreography in print, using the group and solo movements of the dancers, transformed into silhouettes cut out against a white background, in a montage. All the characteristics of Lange's style are already present in *Duraciones visuales*: generous whites, treated images that are always more important than the text, and frequently expressive typography, laid out with no less dynamism than the photos.

*Color natural* (*Natural Color*) dates from 1969. It is one of Lange's best photobooks, a visual poem by photographer Graziano Gasparini and writer Isaac Chocrón of which the designer takes his place as coauthor. Teamwork has its advantages, which Lange has underlined:

*It is essential in book design to present the content in the clearest, most diaphanous, most limpid way possible, at least that is what I think. ... To achieve this it is vital to understand the material you are working with. It has always interested me, if I have the chance and access to the artist or the writer, since that relationship has interested me a lot, because it is there that the real*

A GROWING APPRECIATION OF THE PHOTOBOOK has inspired a flood of new scholarship and connoisseurship of the form—few as surprising and inspiring as *The Latin American Photobook*, the culmination of a four-year, cross-continental research effort led by Horacio Fernández, author of the seminal volume, *Fotografía Pública*. Launched at the Latin American Photo Forum in 2007 and compiled with the input of a committee of researchers, scholars, and photographers, including Marcelo Brodsky, Iatá Cannabrava, Pablo Ortiz Monasterio, and Martín Parr, *The Latin American Photobook* presents one hundred and fifty volumes from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and Venezuela.

*The Latin American Photobook* begins with the 1920s and continues up to today, providing revelatory perspectives on the under-charted history of Latin American photography, and featuring work by great figures such as Claudia Andujar, Barbara Brindl, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Horacio Coppola, Piz Errázuriz, Graciela Iturbide, Sara Facio, Paolo Gasparini, Daniel González, Boris Kossoy, Sergio Larraín, and many others. The book is divided into thematic sections that address topics such as the city, conceptual art and photography, and photography and literature, a category uniquely important to Latin America. Fernández's texts, exhaustively researched and richly illustrated, offer insight not only on each individual title and photographer, but on the multivalent social, political, and artistic and design histories of the region as well. This book is an unparalleled resource for those interested in Latin American photography or in discovering these here-to-fore unknown gems in the history of the photobook at large.

HORACIO FERNÁNDEZ (editor) is a photo-historian, curator, and author of numerous catalogs and books, including *Fotografía Pública: Photography in Print 1919–1939* (1999). He has been a senior lecturer at the Facultad de Bellas Artes de Cuenca, Spain, since 1988. Between 2004 and 2006, he was general curator of PhotoEspaña, the international festival that takes place in Madrid every year.



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